

# Training Environmental Auditors in Russia Far East



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**Project Title:** Training Environmental Auditors in Far Eastern Russia

**Leader:** Khabarovsk Krai local government administration (Khabarovsk, Russia)

**Partner:** American International University Network, Ltd. (Lincoln, Nebraska)

**Location:** Khabarovsk Region, Russia, with a one-week training session in Washington, DC.

**Project Duration:** January 2000 - July 2000

**EcoLinks Project Investment:** Total Project Investment: \$68,034; EcoLinks Grant Support: \$49,804; Project Team Cost Share Contribution: \$18,230.

## Best Practice: Transferable Solution

The project is a Best Practice for several reasons. First, a successful model program to train and license environmental auditors was developed in cooperation with the appropriate government authorities. Second, the training program materials were adapted to develop a university course, “Environmental Auditing of Businesses and Enterprises.” The course is currently offered at two universities. Third, to ensure sustainability of the project, an environmental auditor-training component was established in a local environmental consulting organization. In the first six months of operation, the firm received over \$30,000 in contracts to conduct environmental audits of several manufacturers in the area. Fourth, the project establishes an accredited training program for environmental auditors that can be replicated in other regions in the Russian Federation where industry/business development is sufficiently high.

# Project Summary

Prior to project implementation, of the approximately 500 environmental auditors in the Russian Federation, there were only 7 environmental auditors in the entire Russia Far East region (an area approximately two-thirds the size of the continental United States). Furthermore, the State Committee on the Environment of the Russian Federation, the federal government body empowered to license environmental auditors, only licensed auditors who had completed training courses through the Center for Environmental Security (CES), located in Moscow, seven time zones away from Khabarovsk.

The Khabarovsk Krai local government administration, together with their American partner, the American International University Network, was awarded an EcoLinks Challenge Grant to develop a model program to train environmental auditors in the Russia Far East region. The Project Team worked with trainers from CES to prepare a cadre of environmental auditors in Russia Far East consistent with Russian Federation standards. As a result of this EcoLinks-funded project, 26 environmental auditors were trained, and licensed by the State Committee on the Environment of the Russian Federation. The Project Team also developed a "train the trainers" component, whereby the newly licensed environmental auditors completed additional course work, licensed by the Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation, qualifying them to conduct environmental audit training. This is the first instance of such dual licensing in Russia.

In order to ensure the sustainability of the model training program, the Project Team worked to establish environmental audit and training components within the Center for Ecological Services and Expertise (CESE), in Khabarovsk. This expertise will help meet the need for conducting environmental audits in Russia Far East. CESE received accreditation from the State Committee on the Environment in July 2000. It is now the only organization outside of CES accredited by the State Committee on the Environment to train environmental auditors in the Russian Federation.

## Project Activities

The main goal of this project was to develop a model program to train environmental auditors in the far eastern region of Russia. The main project activities were as follows:

### **1. Conducted preliminary work to establish a model training program**

Action: Representatives of the Project Partner, (the American International University Network) traveled to Moscow in November 1999 and again in January 2000 to meet with representatives from the International Independent University for Environmental and Political Science (IIUEPS), the Ministry of Education, the Center for Environmental Security, and the State Committee on Environment, to discuss the proposed training program and negotiate potential joint licensing of environmental audit trainers.

Project team members worked in collaboration with trainers from the Center for Environmental Security, IIUEPS and local experts to develop a model environmental auditor-training program including a methodology and course materials. The model auditor-training course included two components: a classroom study component and a fieldwork component during which students would conduct practice audits on two enterprise sites. The proposed course packet was discussed and cleared with IIUEPS and the State Committee on Environment.

Two practice audit sites were selected, Chechzirskii Wood Factory and Igristii Vina Winery, in which trainees worked with instructors to conduct practice audits during the model-training program. Before the training program began, complete environmental audits were conducted by licensed auditors at the two sites. The results of the audits were discussed with CES, and distributed to the Chechzirskii Wood Factory and the Igristii Vina Winery.

Product(s): 1) An agreement was reached for the model training program to use trainers accredited by both MoE and SCE. 2) Methodology for the training course was developed and joint licensing of the model-training program by both MoE and SCE is agreed to. 3) Environmental audits on Chechzirskii Wood Factory and Igristii Vina Winery were conducted.

## **2. Conducted environmental audit training**

Action: Twenty-six students completed the model environmental-audit training program. Instructors and trainers from IIUEPS, CES, the State Environmental Committee of the Russian Federation, the Khabarovsk Region Environmental Committee, the NGO "Center on Environmental Works", and professors from various Khabarovsk environmental and technical institutes presented the course materials. The model auditor training course was divided into two components, a classroom study component and a field work component. Two-week classroom study covered the following training modules: Prevention, Safety and Remediation (including a review of corresponding laws and normative acts); Environmental Audit Process, Russian Federation Standards; International Environmental Audit Standards, ISO Standards and Environmental Management Systems; Professional Ethics in Conducting Audits; and Environmental Legislation, International and Domestic.

During the third week, students worked with senior environmental auditors to conduct environmental audits at two sites, Chechzirskii Wood Factory and Igristii Vina Winery. At both sites, students gained first-hand experience in data collection and the analysis and preparation of documentation for an environmental audit. At Igristii, students worked with trainers to evaluate Igristii's environmental management system as a whole, and the plant's impact on the environment, including how Igristii treats and stores plant wastes. At Chechzirskii, students evaluated the plant's adherence to environmental legislation (e.g., forest protection). After student groups completed their practice audits, trainers reviewed their reports and compared them with the official audits conducted earlier by licensed auditors.

Product(s): 1) Twenty-six students trained using the model environmental-audit training program 2) Environmental audits at the Chechzirskii Wood Factory and the Igristii Vina Winery.

### **3. Conducted US study tour**

Action: Five representatives of the Khabarovsk Krai administration and one representative from CESE traveled to the United States for a one-week study tour of the environmental management systems of local government administrations in the US. The material covered included reviewing municipal environmental zoning practices and city and state environmental legislation; international auditor standards in practice; and city and state government policies, procedures and practices for waste management. The study tour was organized by the American Project Partner, American International University Network, Ltd.

During the study tour, Professor Larry Hourcle, the Assistant Dean of the Environmental Law Department at Georgetown Law School reviewed and assessed the environmental auditor model-training program, including the results of the environmental audits conducted at Chechzinskii and Igristii.

Product(s): Improved understanding of environmental management in the US

### **4. Established and gained accreditation of environmental audit training program**

Action: An environmental audit component was established within the Center for Ecological Service and Expertise, Khabarovsk. Using 16 of the trained environmental auditors, the Center will help to meet the demand for environmental audits in the region. Since project completion, the Center has received contracts amounting to almost \$50,000 to conduct audits at the following sites in Far Eastern Russia: Dal Tekecom, Khabenergo (an electricity supplier), AVEST (television set manufacturer), the Far East Railway, and several alcohol producing companies in the region.

In order to ensure sustainability of the program, the Project Team also decided to pursue accreditation of the developed model-training program from the State Committee on Environment. After obtaining all the necessary supporting documents and filing an application, the Center for Ecological Services and Expertise was accredited by the State Committee on the Environment to train environmental auditors.

Product(s): 1) Environmental audit component within the Center for Ecological Service and Expertise, Khabarovsk 2) Accreditation of the model training program .

### **5. Disseminated project results**

Action: The results of the project were disseminated at a round-table discussion attended by trainers, trainees and mass media representatives. The Khabarovsk TV station SET, Ltd covered the model environmental auditor training program in the TV program "Guberniya".

Furthermore using materials from the training program, the Project Team developed a university course "Environmental Auditing of Businesses and Enterprises". This

course is currently offered at the Khabarovsk Technical University and the Far East State University, Vladivostok.

Product(s): 1) Round table discussion of project results attended by trainers, trainees, and the mass media 2) Television coverage of the model environmental auditing program on the program, "Guberniya" 3) University course, "Environmental Auditing of Businesses and Enterprises" currently offered at the Khabarovsk Technical University and the Far East State University, Vladivostok

## **Project Benefits**

Several benefits were derived from this project. The capacity building benefits are especially noteworthy since this project establishes the institutional capacity to conduct environmental audits in The Russia Far East region. Furthermore, the environmental auditing methodology established in the region as part of this EcoLinks project provides a framework for cleaner production that can produce multiple environmental and economic benefits including making companies more market competitive.

### **Capacity Building Benefits**

This project built the institutional capacity to conduct environmental audits and train and license environmental auditors in Russia Far East. An accredited environmental auditor-training component was established within the Center for Ecological Service and Expertise, Khabarovsk. The Center is now authorized by the State Committee on Environment to train environmental auditors, ensuring further sustainability of the program. The Center in Khabarovsk is the first organization located outside of Moscow authorized to conduct environmental audit training, enabling the Center to help meet the need for licensed environmental auditors throughout Russia Far East.

Twenty-six environmental auditors were trained and licensed as environmental auditors (by the State Committee on the Environment of the Russian Federation) in Khabarovsk. In addition, these 26 environmental auditors completed additional training and were licensed by the Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation to train others. This is the first instance of such dual licensing in Russia.

Using 16 of the environmental auditors trained, the Center will help to meet the need to conduct environmental audits in the region.

### **Environmental Benefits**

The environmental benefits derived from this project result from improved access to environmental audits and the development of a local cadre of environmental auditors. The audits conducted by the those trained as a result of the institutions established through this project will promote cleaner industrial production in the Russia Far East region. The development of a cadre of local expertise means that audits will be easier to arrange and cheaper to conduct than bringing in auditors from Moscow.

## **Economic Benefits**

Environmental audit certification can help open the door for export of a goods from RFE abroad and may also make company goods more competitive in local markets.

Furthermore, this project established a local market and local expertise for environmental audits. During the first year following EcoLinks project implementation, The Center for Ecological Services and Expertise has received contracts amounting to almost \$50,000 to conduct audits at the following sites in Far Eastern Russia: Dal Tekecom, Khabenergo (an electricity supplier), AVEST (television set manufacturer), the Far East Railway, and at several alcohol producing companies in the region.

In the future, the Center also hopes to establish regular auditor training courses, which will raise additional income.

## **Lessons Learned**

The following lessons were learned from this project:

- It was important to reach agreement with all of the necessary licensing bodies in Moscow and their training arms. Regular communication and travel to Moscow for face-to-face discussions was key.
- It is important to work with qualified, licensed trainers, preferably from CES, who have in-depth understanding of licensing bureau (in this case the State Committee on the Environment) criteria and standards.
- To ensure post-project sustainability, it was important to carefully weigh the demand of industry/business in the region for environmental audits.

## **Contact Information**

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